



Testimony of

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Chair, Bridge to Success Partnership

Regarding bill HB 6824
of Governor Malloy's Budget Proposal
Appropriations Committee

March 3, 2015

Good evening. I am Christine Bianchi, Chair of the Bridge to Success Partnership in Waterbury, the first and leading Cradle to Career Partnership in Connecticut. Today I am here to not only urge you not to eliminate the Community Plans for Early Childhood line item in the Office of Early Childhood budget – which eliminates \$900,000 in funding, but to point out that this funding and partnership like ours, are actually putting money on the table to help this committee reach their goals. These funds are more than 100% matched dollar for dollar by the William Caspar Graustein Memorial Fund and the Children's Fund of Connecticut in the amount of \$1 million. In Waterbury for example, we have leveraged the \$20,000 investment from the State of CT and have had diverse funders match these funds to a total annual budget of \$224,000.

Over 84 partners come together to ensure that Waterbury youth succeed in school, work and life. We do this through a collective impact model that has been well researched across the world as the only approach that will truly have an impact on the large social issues that youth in our community face. No single organization, sector nor program can solve the challenges of the social issues such as poverty, homelessness, poor academic achievement, high unemployment rates, domestic violence and drug addiction. Bridge to Success is a community-based infrastructure that provides leadership and technical assistance in order to maximize the resources and impact of each formal partner by keeping the focus on five community-selected indicators that ultimately measure youth success. Organizations are doing the messy work of changing how they do business

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Our Centers	StayWell Health Center	Driggs School-Based Health Center	Open Arms at Western CT Mental Health Network
	80 Phoenix Avenue, Waterbury, CT 06702	77 Woodlawn Terrace, Waterbury, CT 06710	95 Thomaston Avenue, Waterbury, CT 06702
	StayWell South End Health Center I & II	Open Arms at St. Vincent DePaul Shelter	Open Arms at Salvation Army Family Shelter
	1309 & 1302 South Main Street, Waterbury, CT 06706	114 Benedict Street, Waterbury, CT 06706	74 Central Avenue, Waterbury, CT 06702

in a partnership and making changes that are sometimes uncomfortable, but will ultimately lead to greater impact.

Today, I ask that the legislature do the same. The Governor's proposed budget disproportionately cuts programming that impacts our youth. While only 1/3 of the budget expenditures previously supported youth, 54% of the Governor's cuts impact youth. I cannot think of any positive outcome that could be plausible to justify such a proposal. Our youth are completely at the mercy of the decisions we make, with no alternatives. There are opportunities in this budget to make fair and equitable choices. Budget cuts can be made fairly across the board, all line items, without exemption, including unpopular decisions such as state employees, large scale projects and corporate incentives. Revenue must also be addressed. Again, let's not choose one group versus another. This is not the environment where programming should be evaluated. There should be non-political means for doing so. (Which by the way, Bridge to Success uses a results-based accountability model for measuring outcomes and adopts Best Practices for promotion and implementation.)

Again, I urge you to continue the existing funding found under HB 6824. Thank you for your consideration.